

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of protecting an airborne aircraft against hijacking, comprising the steps of activating an autopilot system for automatically flying an aircraft to a landing at a nearest airport in communication with the autopilot system; and immobilizing all persons on-board on the aircraft.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the immobilizing step includes the step of releasing a gas throughout the interior of the aircraft.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the gas is nitrous oxide.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the immobilizing step includes the step of exposing the persons to acoustic irradiation.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the immobilizing step includes the step of exposing the persons to electro-stimulation.

6. Apparatus for protecting an airborne aircraft against hijacking, comprising:  
first means for activating an autopilot system for automatically flying an aircraft to a landing at a nearest airport in communication with the autopilot system; and  
second means for immobilizing all persons on-board on the aircraft.
7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein the second means includes a release mechanism installed in a body of the aircraft for discharging a gas throughout the interior of the aircraft.
8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the gas is nitrous oxide.
9. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the first means includes a manually operated panic button operatively connected to the autopilot system and the release mechanism.
10. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the first means includes a panic button which is operatively connected to the autopilot system and the release mechanism and constructed for actuation through speech recognition.
11. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the first means includes a panic button which is operatively connected to the autopilot system and the release mechanism and constructed for actuation by a touch screen.